

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 /074 W

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O R 021635Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3913

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

S E C R E T LUANDA 1052

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJECT: HIGH COMMISSIONER LEAVES FOR LISBON

1. LUANDA HAS BEEN FILLED WITH STORIES OF THE RESIGNATION OF HIGH COMMISSIONER GENERAL ANTONIO DA SILVA CARDOSO EVER SINCE IT WAS KNOWN THAT ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO WAS COMING TO ANGOLA FOR CONSULTATIONS. THE SPECULATION WAS FED BY THE UPROAR OVER THE PORTUGUESE ARMY REPRISALS AGAINST THE MPLA AT VILA ALICE ON JULY 27. ONE THING IS CERTAIN; THE HIGH COMMISSIONER LEAVES FOR LISBON TODAY, AUGUST 2, AT 1800 HOURS LOCAL TIME.

2. I TALKED ON AUGUST 2 WITH A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. EVERYONE IS UNWILLING TO TALK, APPARENTLY BECAUSE NOTHING HAS BEEN SETTLED AND BECAUSE THE MODERATE/LEFT CONFRONTATION IN LISBON HAS REACHED HERE AND POSITIONS ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH ANGOLA ARE HARDENING.

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3. CARDOSO SAID HE HAS NOT RESIGNED AND HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO RESIGN. HE TOLD ME THAT PRESIDENT COSTA GOMEZ CALLED HIM ON JULY 30 TO ASK HIM TO COME TO LISBON FOR CONSULTATIONS. CARDOSO HAS NOT BEEN UP TO PORTUGAL FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND COSTA GOMEZ SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS TIME. DESPITE THE FACT THE CALL CAME AFTER THE VILA ALICE INCIDENT, CARDOSO DOUBTS THE PRESIDENT IS OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MATTER. THE REAL ISSUE IS THE FUTURE ROLE OF PORTUGAL HERE AND THE OPTIONS SENT TO LISBON BY CARDOSO SEVERAL DAYS AGO. CARDOSO SAID HE DOES NOT KNOW IF HE WILL RETURN TO ANGOLA. THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY COMPLEX, HE SAID. HE DID NOT WANT TO SAY MUCH ABOUT THE TALKS WITH ROSA COUTINHO, BUT HE REPORTED THEY WERE NOT FRUITFUL AND THAT HE AND ROSA COUTINHO ARE QUITE FAR APART ON THE COURSE OF ACTION THAT SHOULD BE ADOPTED. FOR THE RECORD, CARDOSO SAID HE LEARNED OF ROSA COUTINHO'S IMPENDING ARRIVAL ON JULY 31, A DAY AFTER COSTA GOMEZ ASKED HIM TO COME UP. CARDOSO SAID THAT ONE OF THE REASONS HE IS GOING IS TO SETTLE HIS WIFE IN LISBON. KIDNAP THREATS HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST HER, AND THREE ABORTIVE ATTEMPTS WERE MADE AGAINST THE WIFE OF COLONEL ALMENDRA, THE HEAD OF THE LUANDA OPERATIONAL COMMAND. MRS ALMENDRA LEAVES WITHIN THE NEXT DAY, IF NOT WITH THE CARDOSOS. THE ATTEMPTS ARE THOUGHT TO BE THE WORK OF PEOPLES POWER, THE MPLA-SPONSORED ARMED CIVILIAN GROUPS THAT CONTROL MOST OF LUANDA'S GHETTOS.

4. I ALSO TALKED WITH NAVY COMMANDER ADMIRAL CARDOSO, WHO SAID HE JUST HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. HE, LIKE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, WAS EXHAUSTED ON AUGUST 2 FROM THZ LONG MEETINGS AND INCREASING TENSION. HE SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION OR, AS HE PUT IT, "IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT", THE HIGH COMMISSIONER MIGHT NOT COME BACK. CARDOSO HAS NOT RESIGNED AND HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO RESIGN HE REPORTED. COMMANDER MARTINS E SILVA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN ANGOLA OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (MFA) TOLD ME HE WAS NOT AT LIBERTY TO SAY MUCH, NOR DID HE KNOW MUCH, BUT THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAD NOT RESIGNED AND HE, MARTINS, HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE OF THE LISBON CONSULTATIONS. I ASKED HIM TO GIVE ME HIS PERSONAL OPINION. HE SAID HE DOUBTED CARDOSO WOULD RETURN.

5. ON AUGUST 1 LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANTONIO VINHAS, COMMAND OF THE COMMANDOS IN LUANDA, WHO PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE MILA ALICE

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OPERATION, TOLD ME THAT THE BULK OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN ANGOLA FULLY SUPPORTS THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. THE AIR FORCE, NAVY, COMMANDOS AND MOST OTHER UNITS ARE WITH HIM AND WILL NOT LET HIM BE REMOVED. HE IS A GOOD MAN, SAID VINHAS, AND HONEST, AND MUST NOT BE SACRIFICED TO MAKE WAY FOR THE LEFTISTS. FROM WHAT VINHAS TOLD ME ABOUT THE VILA ALICE INCIDENT, I SUSPECT IT MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PRESENT CRISIS. HE SAID THE OPERATION WAS CAREFULLY PLANNED AMONG A FEW

TRUSTWORTHY OFFICERS TO MAKE SURE THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT
REPRESENTATIVES
HERE DID NOT GET WIND OF IT. OF THE NINE MFA OFFICERS IN THE
PALACE, SAID VINHAS, THREE OR FOUR ARE WAY OUT ON THE LEFT AND
DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO FRUSTRATE THE EFFORTS OF THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS. THEY ARE CONSTANTLY ON
THE TELEPHONE TO LISBON, OR SEND TELEGRAMS, TO INFORM THEIR
LEFTIST FRIENDS OF PLANS AND DECISIONS, OR TO GIVE THEIR OWN
INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS. LISBON THEN COMES BACK THROUGH OFFICIAL
CHANNELS WITH ORDERS THAT EFFECTIVELY HAMSTRING THE EFFORTS OF
PORTUGUESE FORCES HERE.
KILLORAN

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